GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:372
ANSWERED ON:18.12.2006
ALKALINE SOIL
Singh Shri Lakshman

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a Whether the area of alkaline soil has been increasing in the country particularly in the States of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh ;

(b) If so, its effects on the agricultural produce; and

(c) The steps taken/proposed to be taken to prevent soil from becoming alkaline in these States ?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR)

(a) to (c): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (c) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 372 DUE FOR REPLY ON 18TH DECEMBER, 2006.

(a) to (c): No Sir. As per available estimate, alkalinity/salinity has declined from 8.632 million ha. in 1996 to 5.944 million ha. in 2005 in the country. In the above period alkalinity/ salinity in the States of Haryana and Punjab has decreased whereas in case of Uttar Pradesh the same has marginally increased. As per Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Central Soil Salinity Research Institute, Karnal, the accumulation of excess salt in the root zone results in a partial or complete loss of soil productivity and the presence of such salt adversely effects the growth of most of crop plants.

Government of India has launched a Centrally Sponsored Programme for Reclamation of Alkali Soil (RAS) in the Seventh Five Year Plan for reclamation of soils, which are suffering from alkalinity. This programme is now subsumed under Macro Management of Agriculture

(MMA). Under MMA the States have been given flexibility for allocating the fund to different schemes subsumed under MMA, depending on the availability of central fund and extent of problems in the State. Under this programme,the scientific package as recommended by ICAR is being adopted for reclamation of alkali soil in the selected States where alkalinity exists as per scientific parameters. A World Bank Assisted Project on Sodic Land Reclamation is also being implemented in the State of Uttar Pradesh. Under above programmes, since inception upto end of X Five Year Plan an area of 9.01 lakh ha. has been reclaimed with an expenditure of Rs.1214.27 crore including the States of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, as per State-wise details annexed.

Government of India is also implementing various watershed development programmes, namely,

(i) National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas(NWDPRA),

(ii) Soil Conservation for Enhancing Productivity of Degraded Lands in the Catchments of River Valley Project and Flood Prone River(RVP & FPR),

(iii) Watershed Development Project in Shifting Cultivation Areas(WDPSCA),

(iv)Externally Aided Projects(EAPs) on Watershed Development,

(v)Drought Prone Area Programme(DPAP),
(vi)Desert Development Programmes,

(vii) Integrated Waste-land Development Project (IWDP) and
(viii) National Afforestation & Eco-Development Project Schemes(NAEPs) for control of soil erosion and land degradation. These programmes are also helpful in sustaining the productivity potential of the reclaimed alkaline area. Besides these, the promotion of balance use of chemical fertilizer, scientific crop and water management including organic farming etc. are also encouraged under different schemes/programmes for sustaining the productivity potential of the land.